

Bryant Escort for Dr. Hyatt

Felix A. Mirando receives NCCJ humanitarian award

CRANSTON — Felix A. Mirando, the community leader and founder and chairman of the board of Imperial Knife Co. in Providence, last night received the national humanitarian award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ).

Mirando, 80, was presented the award at the conference's 25th anniversary brotherhood dinner at the Cranston Hilton Inn.



About 500 guests were on hand. They included members and national officials of the conference; Gov. J. Joseph Garrahy and Mayor James L. Taft Jr. of Cranston, both of whom presented citations to the guest of honor; Mayor Vincent A. Cianci Jr. of Providence; the Most Rev. Louis E. Gelineau, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence, who gave the invocation; and Rabbi Eli A. Bohnen, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emmanu-El in Providence, who gave the benediction.

Former U.S. Sen. John O. Pastore was toastmaster.

The humanitarian award was presented the 80-year-old industrialist in recognition of his 25 years of participation in conference activities and for "his outstanding contributions in the field of human relations in Southeastern New England," said Dr. David Hyatt, national president of the NCCJ.

Felix, as Mirando has always insisted he be called, was a founder of the NCCJ in this region in 1953. Four years later, in 1957, he received the NCCJ's annual brotherhood award. From 1961 through 1976, Felix was chairman of the NCCJ's board of directors.

"Long before it was popular, Felix employed blacks, saying that 'people are people and I don't care where they come from, what color they are or what beliefs they have — they're all human beings and I love them,'" Hyatt said.

Hyatt called him a "caring" and "loving" man who has given unselfishly of himself and his time.

The NCCJ president cited the Rhode Islander for "inspirational and spiritual guidance to the people of the state as evidenced by his unselfish civic and philanthropic service.

"For exemplary personal standards in championing social justice for all citizens.

"For unswerving courage in fostering solutions to the problems of racial justice and inequality.

"For compassion and sensitivity to all human beings and for outstanding initiative in promoting mutual understanding among people of all creeds.

"And for integrity, loyalty and commitment to the goals and ideals of the NCCJ — building better relationships among persons of all religions, races and nationalities."